



STATE OF IOWA

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KEVIN W. CONCANNON, DIRECTOR

INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO. 662

TO: Iowa Medicaid Pharmacy Providers

ISSUED BY: Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise

DATE: December 6, 2007

RE: Iowa Medicaid Electronic Record System (I-MERS)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

The Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME) is pleased to announce the release of an exciting new patient management tool that will provide assistance to pharmacy providers as they strive to coordinate care given to their Iowa Medicaid patients.

The Iowa Medicaid Electronic Record System (I-MERS) is a web-based tool that will give pharmacy providers up-to-date information about what prescriptions have been paid for by Iowa Medicaid. I-MERS will allow pharmacy providers to view Medicaid members' prescriptions that are currently in the Medicaid computer system.

The system will now be available to all Iowa Medicaid pharmacy providers. Registration is required (see next page).

Iowa Medicaid is providing this service at no charge in hopes that it will decrease duplication of effort and greatly benefit Iowa Medicaid practitioners by providing critical information that was not available to providers previously.

This new system is not a complete electronic medical record system. It only provides a listing of each individual prescription paid for by the Medicaid program. The system is updated weekly, so recent prescriptions may not appear on I-MERS. **Sensitive information, such as AIDS/HIV, substance abuse, and mental health-related is not available through this system because of legal impediments.**

At a glance, you will know the prescription drugs (including dosage) reimbursed for a patient by the IME.

- *As just one example of how the system can be used -- How many times do you ask a patient what medications they are taking and they can't remember?*
I-MERS can help answer that question as well as verify a member's response.

Access to this information is secure and provided through a web portal. The system provides access to Protected Health Information as defined by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 ("HIPAA"). **Providers will be responsible for ensuring appropriate usage by their staff and be in full compliance with HIPAA and the Department's statutory confidentiality obligations found at section 217.30 of the Iowa Code.**

This is just a starting point, and we look forward to continued feedback from our provider community regarding how we can improve the system.

How to Register for Access

Registration is accomplished on an organizational basis (e.g. pharmacy). To register your organization and users:

1. **Send a letter.** The Iowa Medicaid provider requesting access to the I-MERS system must send a letter on the organization's letterhead. The provider sending the letter requesting access to I-MERS will be responsible for assuring appropriate staff usage under HIPAA. Indicate "I-MERS Registration" in the subject line of the letter and send the letter to:

**IME Provider Services
IMERS Access
100 Army Post Rd
Des Moines, Iowa 50315**

2. **Include in the letter:**
 - a. Your Provider Number (7 digit Medicaid provider number or NPI)
 - b. Your Provider Type (Pharmacy)
 - c. Tax ID Number
 - d. The name and address of the organization (e.g. Walgreens Pharmacy)
 - e. The primary point of contact for the organization, a telephone number, an e-mail address, and your role within the
 - f. Signature
3. IME personnel will then contact you to discuss user names, passwords and provide you with additional instructions.

Important Notes and Limitations of the I-MERS System

There are some design aspects of I-MERS that you must be aware of when using the system:

- I-MERS only provides information on currently eligible Medicaid Members. However, this is not a substitute for eligibility verification through IME's eligibility verification systems (e.g. phone or website);
- **Sensitive information, such as AIDS/HIV, substance abuse, and mental health-related is not available through this system because of legal impediments.**

You must be an active Iowa Medicaid provider, be a registered user to access this system, and **be responsible for ensuring appropriate usage by your staff and be in full compliance with HIPAA and the Department's statutory confidentiality obligations found at section 217.30 of the Iowa Code.**

- To access information on a Medicaid Member, a Provider must enter the Member's ID, confirm their identity, and identify the Licensed Medical Health Provider who will be using this information.
- To take advantage of this system, each user must acknowledge the terms and conditions of use. Terms and conditions are presented to the user on their first use and can be accessed within the system from any of the web screens. In particular, it is important to remember that HIPAA privacy and security rules and regulations must be adhered to. As with any electronic system, appropriate access procedures and protocols by users will help prevent unintended disclosures.
- This information is being made available for the sole purpose of enhancing the quality of care our provider community provides to Medicaid Members, any other use of the information or the system is strictly prohibited.

If you have any questions, please contact IME Provider Services, at 1-800-338-7909, or locally in Des Moines at 515-725-1004, or by e-mail at:

imeproviderservices@dhs.state.ia.us.